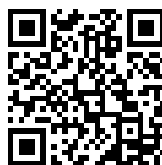

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CONCERNING

THE HOLY ANGELS,

AND THEIR

MINISTRY:

A POSTHUMOUS TREATISE.

Thos. Sherrin



All that of Angels God to man makes known,
 Here by the light of his pure word is shewn ;
 'Tis Jacob's dream :—behold a ladder rise,
 Resting on earth, but reaching to the skies ;
 Where Faith the glorious hierarchies may trace,
 Abroad in nature, providence, and grace ;
 Here the stone pillow, and the desert sod,
 Become the gate of heaven—the house of God :
 Put off thy shoes ; approach with awe profound ;
 The place whereon thou stand'st is holy ground.

SHEFFIELD:

PRINTED BY JOHN BLACKWELL, AT THE IRIS OFFICE

1826.

PREFACE.

THE difficulties that embarrass enquiries into the Ministry of Angels, ought not to make us despair of discovering much valuable and profitable truth in the investigation of a subject so sublime and illustrious. The more recondite are the objects of ordinary science, with the greater avidity and with more indefatigable application are they pursued by philosophers, as if their very abstruseness sharpened the appetite for knowledge, and strengthened the capacity of research. Shall the Christian, then, decline assiduous enquiry into subjects of Divine Revelation, because they are naturally abstruse? Are we prematurely to conclude, that, because profound, they are unfathomable; or that, if dazzled by their brightness, no medium of contemplating them is attainable? If concealed from our immediate view, are we to assume that the veil which covers them, because dense, is impenetrable? The abstruseness of many topics of Revelation, on the contrary, adds to their interest; for, on that very account, we bring to the consideration of them an awe, an hesitation, which their sacredness might fail to inspire, if we did not, at the same time, perceive, that they are surrounded with an obscurity which heightens our respect, and excites our closer investigation.

If the stupendous and magnificent objects of creation, that are daily presented to our view, make little impression on our minds, it is because we are familiarized to them by constantly beholding them. The voice of thunder awakens attention only in proportion to its infrequency. If the sun, in its meridian splendor, appeared but once in our lifetime, what sensations would it excite, and what efforts to comprehend so glorious a spectacle!

The visible Ministry of Angels was always rare, and has been nearly discontinued since the completion of written Revelation, from which alone we can judge of their invisible ministrations, or be ascertained of their former manifest intercourse with mankind. Records of this may justly be precious to us. Inquiry is superseded, and attention naturally languishes, in proportion to the frequency and distinctness of the object ; but how few, how short, how mysterious have angelic visits ever been to men ! How greatly must they have awakened curiosity !—how powerful a stimulus to the activity of prying intellect must they have given !—When we learn, also, the ineffable benignity of these exalted beings, their endowment with every quality that should endear them to us, we may well be humbly anxious for further acquaintance with them. We hope for this, as one among the privileges of Heaven, where our Lord has taught us that we should resemble them. The more we do so on earth, the better we shall be prepared for, and the more assured of entering that blissful state. Of what we wish to resemble, we should often think. To become angelic, we must learn what Angels are, and what they do.

To aid that endeavour, the following short Treatise was penned, by one who had long been a disciple of Christ, and made eminent progress in his school. It was originally composed for private use, and open only to the perusal of a few of his now bereaved surviving friends, who deem it worthy of extensive circulation, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which, as a posthumous publication, it is exposed to general view. It is therefore offered to the consideration of pious readers, with prayer for the blessing of God, and a sincere desire that it may edify and console “ the heirs of Salvation.”

August, 1826. }

OF THE

HOLY ANGELS,

&c. &c.

ALMOST all nations have believed in a kind or order of middle beings, superior to men, but inferior to the Deity: and, too often, paid them religious honours, under a superstitious notion of their being proper objects of worship: nay, some have even gone so far as to sacrifice their sons and daughters unto devils:—but of those blessed and holy beings, generally called Angels, of which we purpose to treat, the Scriptures alone afford us a just and intelligible account.

The word Angel is a name, not of nature, but of office; and is sometimes given to any messenger indefinitely: and in the 1st, 2d, and 3d chapters of the book of the Revelations, to the Bishops or Overseers of the Seven Churches; but more generally to those Spirits, or Spiritual Beings, who inhabit

the heavens; as it is said, "He maketh his Angels Spirits," Ps. civ. 4; and they are distinguished (Rev. v.) from Him that sits upon the throne, and from the Lamb, and from all the saints and redeemed ones to God, and from every creature spoken of in the 13th verse of that chapter, but more especially in the 11th. Of these, it appears that there are various orders or degrees in heaven; and some far more excellent and glorious than others. They are distinguished into *Cherubim* and *Seraphim*; and are called *Thrones*, *Dominions*, *Principalities*, and *Powers*: (as are also some of the Evil Ones,) probably denoting a difference of degree; and possibly some subordination of rule, or office, and dignity. As nothing more particularly is revealed to us on this head, it is safest, without intruding into those things which we have not seen or understood, to pass on to those which are more plain, and more plainly declared.

1. That they are all Spirits or Spiritual Beings, ("of the Angels He saith, who maketh his Angels Spirits," Heb. i. 7.) and have not flesh and bones, as men, and many other creatures. As our Saviour saith, "A Spirit hath not flesh and bones," &c. Luke, xxiv. 39. But He no where insinuates that they are without their proper vehicles or coverings, which may probably serve them for bodies, and by which they hold mutual intercourse with each other. They have appeared upon earth in the similitude of men. "He (Abraham) lift up

his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him." Gen. xviii. 2. And since our blessed Saviour informs us, that in the resurrection, the saints will be like or equal to the Angels, when they shall receive their glorious and spiritual bodies, fashioned according to the image of his glorious body:—"They are equal unto the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke, xx. 36. "It is raised in glory—it is raised in power—it is raised a Spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. iii. 21. It is reasonable to suppose that the Angels likewise have their proper bodies or coverings.

2. They are *created* Spirits.—As above, "He *maketh* his Angels Spirits." Ps. civ. 4. Heb. i. 7. And so they are distinct from, and infinitely inferior to Him that sitteth upon the throne, who hath created all things, and for whose "pleasure they are and were created." Rev. iv. 9, 11.

God, indeed, "is a Spirit," John, iv. 24., but not created. He is, from everlasting to everlasting, God: and is the Author and Former of all things; and so, also, the Creator of those Spirits, of whom we are speaking. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that

He is strong in power, not one faileth." Isa. xl. 26. The Father of Spirits. " We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live ?" Heb. xii. 9. " And they fell upon their faces and said, O God, the God of the Spirits of all flesh." Numb. xvi. 22. He created heaven, and the things that are therein, viz. the Angels in heaven. " And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever ; who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer." Rev. x. 5, 6. Upon this account, the Psalmist saith, "Praise ye the Lord—all his Angels. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created." Ps. cxlviii. 2, 5,

3. He created them by JESUS CHRIST; by whom He created all things. He " is the image of the invisible God ; the first-born of every creature ; for, by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible ; whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers ; all things were created by Him and for Him ; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. i. 15, 17, compare with John, i. 1, 3, " In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was

God; the same was in the beginning with God: all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made." And the Angels are also subjected to Him in his glorified humanity. Universal sovereignty over all creatures in heaven, earth, and hell, was the glorious meed or reward of his sufferings. It was the purpose of the Father, to gather together in one, even in Christ, all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; and so, out of the two distinct families of Angels and Men, to form one Universal and Catholic Society, which is to continue for ever. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church." Ephes. i. 10, 21, 22.

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Chap. iv, 10. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Phil. ii. 9, 10. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: Angels, and authorities,

and powers, being made subject unto Him.”
1 Pet. iii. 22.

Proceed we, therefore, to speak :—

- I. *Of their Nature and Properties ;*
- II. *Of their Numbers ;*
- III. *Of their concern and interest in the Work of our Redemption ; and*
Lastly, *Of their Ministry and Offices.*

I. *Of their Nature.*—They were of God made good ; for “ God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good ;” Gen. i. 31., and in an high, honourable, and happy condition, “ What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thine hands ; Thou hast put all things under his feet.” Ps. viii. 4, 6. Yea, they are represented as bearing a part in the concert of universal nature, upon the completion of its beauteous and stupendous frame. “ When I laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job, xxxviii. 4, 7 ; but all of them (as we learn in various passages) “ abode not in the truth ;” some sinned, and fell from that good, holy, and glorious state in which they were created.” John, viii. 44.

Some, however, stood stedfast and unmovable, and are signified to be,

1. *Angels of Light*.—For, since Satan is said to be transformed into an Angel of Light, it implies or supposes that such Angels exist: and they are so called, to denote the brightness and purity of their nature, and the place where they dwell, in contradistinction to the fallen Angels, which are Angels of darkness, and are delivered unto chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day: “For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” 2 Pet. ii. 4. “The Angels, which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude 6.

2. They are called *Angels of the Lord, of God, and of Christ*.—Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him.” Gen. xxxii. 1. “Who-soever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels of God. But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the Angels of God.” Luke, xi. 8, 9. “The Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.” Matt. xiii. 41; and in many other places, to distinguish them from the devil and his angels. Matt. xxv. 41.

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels." And the Dragon, called the Devil, and Satan and his Angels. Rev. xii. 7, 9. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his Angels fought against the dragon, and the Dragon fought and his Angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the Great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his Angels were cast out with him."

3. They are called *Holy Angels*.—Thus, it is sometimes said, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels;" in other places, it is said, "The Son of Man shall come in his glory: and all the Holy Angels with Him." Matt. xvi. 27, with Mark, viii. 38, and Luke, ix. 26, and Matt. xxv. 31,—to signify they are sinless, and free from all iniquity; and devoted to God: and also to distinguish them from the wicked One, and wicked Angels or Spirits.

"I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked One." "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong; and the word of God abideth in you; and ye have overcome the wicked One." 1 John, ii. 13, 14. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked One, and slew his brother." Ch. iii. 12. "Then goeth he, and taketh unto him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself." Matt. xii. 45.

“ And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.” Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

4. They are called *Elect Angels*.—“ I charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels.” 1 Tim. v. 21, to denote their preciousness and excellency : 1 Pet. ii. 4, 6, and to distinguish them from the Angels that “ left their proper habitation,” and are become reprobate, because the Lord hath rejected them.” 2 Pet. ii. 4 ; Jude, 6, with Jer. vi. 30. “ Reprobate silver shall ye call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.”

5. They are *Angels in and of heaven*.—“ Of that day and hour knoweth no man : no, not the Angels of heaven.” Matt. xxiv. 36. “ When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage : but are as the Angels which are in heaven.” Mark, xii. 26,—because they dwell there. “ Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.” Rev. xii. 12. Hence, also, they are called the Heavenly Host. “ Suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host.” Luke, ii. 13. “ He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven.” Dan. iv. 35. In every re-

spect, they are called Angels in Heaven, to distinguish them from the infernal ones that are cast down to hell.

6. They are *Kind Angels* :—Friendly and loving to mankind, but especially to the saints. So it is said, 1 Sam. xxix. 8 : “ Thou art good in my sight as an Angel of God.” And this is farther apparent from their doxology at the nativity of Christ, the Saviour of the world ; when testifying their joy on that auspicious and memorable event, they sang “ Glory be to God in the highest : on earth, peace : good-will towards men.” “ Suddenly, there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest : and on earth, peace : good-will towards men.” Luke, ii. 13, 14.

And “ there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Luke, xv. 7, 10,—which contrasts them with the evil One and his Angels, who seek the ruin and everlasting destruction of mankind, (for Satan was a murderer, or destroyer, from the beginning.) “ He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil Angels among them.” Ps. lxxviii. 49. “ In that same hour, He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits.” Luke, vii. 21 ; “ and certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.” Ch. viii. 2. “ Ye are of your father the

devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: He was a murderer from the beginning." John, viii. 44. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked One, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." 1 John, iii. 12, 13. But their excellency will farther appear, if we consider,

1. *Their great Wisdom and Knowledge.*—So much is signified by that wise woman of Tekoah, saying, "As an Angel of God, so is my Lord the King, to discern good and bad:" and again, "My Lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an Angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth." 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20:—and, "My Lord the King is as an Angel of God."—xix. 27. And although they know not the hearts of men, yet, that they have much more knowledge than the sons of men, our Saviour informs us, when He says, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man: no, not the Angels in heaven;" implying they know more than any mere man. Matt. xxiv. 36, Mark, xiii. 32.

2. *Their great Strength.*—Hence the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, that excel in strength." Ps. ciii. 20. They are greater in power and might than men, or any other creature. "Angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." 2 Pet. ii. 11. Hence they are called Powers. "By

Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ; whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers." Col. i. 16. " Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God ; Angels, and Authorities, and Powers, being made subject unto Him." 1 Pet. iii. 22. This is farther apparent, from 2 Thes. i. 7 ; " The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels : " and from 2 Kings, xix. 35, where we have mention of an Angel of the Lord, who " went out and smote, in one night, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses : " and lastly, from Rev. xii. 7, which informs us of the conquest of Michael and his Angels over the rebel rout of apostate Angels, those mighty and turbulent Potentates, who had the hardiness to wage war in heaven ; the very court of the supreme and celestial King. " And there was war in heaven. Michael and his Angels fought against the Dragon : and the Dragon fought and his Angels, and prevailed not : neither was their place found any more in heaven."

3. Their Swiftmess and Speedy Motion from one Place to another.—With two wings they are said to fly :—" Then flew one of the Seraphims unto me ; " according to that of the prophet, Isa. vi. 2, 6. They can come from heaven to earth in an instant,—as it is said, Luke, ii. 13. "*Sud-*

dently, there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host." To the same purpose is that of the prophet Daniel,—“ While I was speaking in prayer,” saith he, “ even the man Gabriel, whom I saw in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me.” Dan. ix. 21. They have not such gross earthly bodies as ours; and, consequently, are not hindered or retarded by such obstacles and impediments as we are. And because there is nothing that is an object of sense, more subtle than a flame; and, to show the readiness and swiftness of the Angels, the Scripture expressly declares, that God “ maketh his Angels Spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

4. *Their Watchfulness.*—They do not need sleep to refresh them, like men in corruptible bodies; and are therefore called “ Watchers.” “ I saw in the visions of my head, upon my bed, and behold, a Watcher, and an Holy One, came down from heaven.” “ This matter is by the decree of the Watchers; and the demand, by the word of the Holy Ones.” “ And, whereas, the king saw a Watcher and an Holy One coming down from heaven.” Dan. iv. 13, 17, 23. And they are generally thought to be “ the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro in the earth.”

5. *Their Glory.*—They are full of splendour, lustre, brightness, and majesty. Hence we read of the cherubim of glory. “ And over the ark, the

cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat." Heb. ix. 5 ; and the glory of the Angels, " He shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels." Luke, ix. 26. So, also, it is said, " All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on Stephen, saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel." Acts, vi. 15. And Manoah's wife told her husband, " A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an Angel of God, very terrible." Judges, xiii. 6. " And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread ; and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord : for Manoah knew not that he was an Angel of the Lord. But the Angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife : then Manoah knew that he was an Angel of the Lord." Judges, xiii. 15, 16, 21.

6. *Their Immortality*,—signified by those words of our Saviour, where, describing the future state of the saints, He saith " Neither can they die any more ; for they are equal to the Angels." Luke, xx. 36 ; and so shall enjoy that honour, holiness, and happiness, of which they are possessed.

7, and lastly. *Their Persuasive Speech*,—which is intimated by the apostle, when he saith, " Though

I speak with the tongue of Angels.” 1 Cor. xiii. 1. “Though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you.” Gal. i. 8. “I saw a strong Angel, proclaiming with a loud voice.” Rev. v. 2. We may learn something farther of the nature of Angels, from the Scripture metaphors, which represent them. They are compared to fiery chariots and horses :—“It came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire.” 2 Kings, ii. 11. “The Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw ; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha.” Chap. vi. 17. To flames of fire. “Who maketh his ministers a flame of fire.” Ps. civ. 4. Heb. i. 7. And lastly to wind. Ps. xviii. 10.

Let us now draw two or three practical inferences from what has been already advanced, before we pass on to other considerations.

1. We may learn from these Scriptural authorities, the error of the Sadducees, whether ancient or modern, who say there is “Neither Angel nor Spirit.” Acts, xxiii. 8 ; being therein more brutish than the Pharisees were, “For they confessed both.” And this truth was also acknowledged by an unsophisticated Gentile, viz., Cornelius, who “was warned from God by an Holy Angel.” Acts, x. 22. And by an Heathen long before, viz. Achish, king of Gath, who “said to David, I know that thou art

good in my sight, as an Angel of God." 1 Sam. xxix. 9.

2. We may be led, by occasion of the excellency of the Angels, in some little measure, to conceive of his infinite glory and majesty, who is the Creator and Former of all things. So the Lord, from the strength and excellency of some of his creatures, gives us to understand, that He, who created them, must needs be infinitely more glorious and powerful. As, for instance, of Leviathan: "None is so fierce as to dare to stir Him up; who then is able to stand before me? Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine." Job, xli. 10, 11. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth." "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding." Isa. xl. 26, 28.

3. We may also form some imperfect idea what glorious excellency they shall partake of, who are called to the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. i. 9.

Man was made, in the first Adam, "a little lower than the Angels." Ps. viii. 4, 5; as was also, for a little while, our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the Angels;" but "For the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour; and "Hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. i. 4, and 2, 6, 7, 9. "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church." Eph. i. 18, 22. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: Angels, and Authorities, and Powers, being made subject unto Him." 1 Pet. iii. 22. He hath advanced our nature in his person, far above those glorious Spirits: and they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, shall be equal to the Angels, and be the children of God." Matt. xxii. 30; Mark, xii. 25; Luke, xx. 35, 36. "He called you—to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thes. ii. 14. "Beloved, now are

we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John, iii. 2.

II. We have the *Number* of these holy, happy, and glorious creatures, indefinitely intimated to us in the Apocalyptic Vision of St. John. They are called "Many Angels—and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." Rev. v. 11. They are frequently signified to be a very great number, or an innumerable company, as will evidently appear, if we consider—the plain affirmations and intimations thereof in the Holy Scriptures. So, when "Jacob went on his way, the Angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's Host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim." i. e. Two Hosts. Gen. xxxii. i, 2. Now, in calling them the Host of God, he might hereby intimate the great number of them also; for we have that phrase used concerning those that came to assist David. "At that time, day by day, there came to David, to help him, until it was a great host, like the Host of God." The number whereof was about or above four hundred thousand. Compare Gen. xxxii. 1, 2, with 1 Chron. xii. 22 to the 38. Now, if that host, waiting upon and encamping about Jacob, a single man, was so great in number as four hundred thousands, what an innumerable

company is there of them all, considering that there is an innumerable company always about the throne; and that other saints, and even children, were not without their angelic guards. "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him." Ps. xxxiv. 7. "I say unto you, that in heaven their Angels do always behold the face of my Father." Matt. xviii. 10. So, also, it is said, "The Lord shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints, (or Holy Ones, viz. Holy Angels,) from his right hand went a fiery law." "For the law was given" by the "disposition of Angels"—it was "ordained by Angels in the hand of a Mediator." "If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence." Compare Deut. xxxiii. 2, with Acts, vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2.

To the same purpose the Psalmist says, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels." Ps. lxxviii. 17. Behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire." 2 Kings, vi. 17. And Daniel saith, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." Dan. vii. 10. So our Saviour to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels." A Roman legion was six thousands, and so "more than twelve legions," were seventy-two thousands and upwards. Matt. xxvi. 53. There is a multitude

of this heavenly host mentioned, Luke, ii. 10, 13. "The Angel said, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—And suddenly, there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God." An innumerable company of them, Heb. xii. 22. "Ye are come to an innumerable company of Angels." Ten thousands, or many myriads of them—"The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." "The Son of Man shall come with his Angels." "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the Holy Angels with Him: then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels." Jude, xiv. with Matt. xvi. 27, and xxv. 31. 2 Thess. i. 7.

These Holy Angels are God's servants, cheerfully and delightedly doing his commands. "Bless the Lord, ye, his Angels, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.—Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure." Ps. ciii. 20, 21. And in Revelations, vii. 11, they are said to stand about the throne. "All the Angels stood"—as also Rev. viii. 2, "I saw the seven Angels which stood before God," which position shows that they are servants. (Compare Jer. xxxii. 12, "I gave the evidence—unto Baruch, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison," with 2 Kings, xxv. 8. "Ne-

buzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king"—and 1 Kings, x. 8, "Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before Thee.") Servants, to minister to Him, and to receive his orders. "His ministers." Ps. civ. 4. "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him : and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." Dan. vii. 10. "Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14; which leads us to consider the concern they have in the work of our redemption ; and, in the next place, their Ministry and Offices both towards Christ and men.

III. It is very evident, that they are actually *interested in our Redemption* ; and "rejoice (as one expresses it) in so benevolent a design for peopling their mansions, left vacant by the fall of so many of their fellow Angels, with colonies transplanted from our world, from a race of creatures, whom they had given up for lost. It is on this account Christ, as Mediator, is made head of all the heavenly armies ; and He employs them as his ministering Spirits, to minister to them who are heirs of salvation. These glorious creatures are ever on the wing, ready to discharge his orders in any part of his vast empire ; and delight to be employed in the services of his mediatorial kingdom." And, to pursue this subject a little farther, in the words of another eminent writer, where he is treating of that

most glorious achievement of the cross, which finished the wonders of our redemption, “it may be useful to consider how heaven beheld with veneration, what was treated on earth with contempt. It was a large theatre of admiring spectators; multitudes as the sand on the sea shore; a glorious company. In Scripture, Angels, in comparison of men, are called Elohim, Gods. We are not sensible of their glory—which struck prophets almost dead with fear, and tempted an apostle to idolatry. But these, when the First-begotten is brought into the World, all these Gods, are commanded to worship him. “When He bringeth the First-begotten into the world, He saith, “And let all the Angels of God worship Him.” “Worship Him, all ye Gods.” (Heb. i. 6, compared with Psalm xcvi. 7.) The place of Scripture where Angels are called Gods, is the place where they are commanded to worship Christ. And, according to the same apostle, it was a special time of his receiving this glory from the hosts of heaven, when his glory was to be veiled among the inhabitants of the earth. It is evident that they were spectators of all that He did in that state—and, no doubt, they were attentive spectators. They “desired to look,” as it were with outstretched necks, into these things; (1 Pet. i. 12.) typified by the position of the Cherubim over the mercy seat. “The Cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of

the Cherubims be." Ex. xxv. 19, 20. "And the Cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the Chrubims." Chap. xxxvii. 7, 9.

Nor could they be unconcerned spectators.—They were, on divers accounts, interested in it. They did not need a redemption themselves; but they delighted in ours. They loved Christ, and they loved his people, and their love interested them in the glory of the one and of the other. They were concerned to look into those things in time, that were to be remembered to all eternity—and into that performance on earth, which was to be the matter of eternal hallelujahs in heaven. Agreeably to these sentiments, St. Paul declares thus:—"For this end hath the mystery (which hath been hid in God from the beginning of the world) been revealed, (or brought to light) that now unto the Principalities and Powers in the heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Ep. iii. 10. By which expressions, it seems that in the wonderful economy of the church, its rise, constitution, and most blessed consummation in glory, the very Angels themselves make still further discoveries of the divine perfections displayed therein: and that these discoveries, while they excite their deepest admiration, do likewise afford them the most ravishing delight.

IV. Let us now consider those places of Scripture which describe their *Ministry towards Christ and his people.*

1. Toward *Christ the Lord both theirs and ours.*—In his appearance of old to the Patriarchs and Prophets, according to which He is styled the Angel of the Divine Presence, and the Angel of the Covenant, they sometimes accompanied Him. “Abraham lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him.” See Gen. xviii. 2, where one of the three men that came to Abraham, and stayed with him after the others were gone, is called the Lord. “The Lord appeared unto him.” Ver. 1. “The Lord said unto Abraham,” Verses 13, 17, 20, 26. “And the Lord went his way, as soon as He left communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned unto his place.” Verse 33.

Also, at the delivery of the law on Mount Sinai; “Who have received the law by the disposition of Angels.” “The law was ordained by Angels in the hand of a mediator.” Acts, vii. 53, with Gal. iii. 19. “If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast.” Heb. ii. 2.

But more especially were they concerned about his incarnation and personal appearance in the flesh. It was an Angel that showed to Zacharias glad tidings concerning John the Baptist, the messenger that went before the face of the Lord to prepare his way. “There appeared unto him an Angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of in-

cense.” “And the Angel said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God ; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.” Luke, i. 11, 19. And that said to the Virgin Mary, “Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.” Luke, i. 26, 35 ; and to Joseph, “Fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. i. 20, 24. When He was born, an Angel addressed the shepherds. “Lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the Angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people : for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest : and on earth, peace : goodwill towards men.” Luke, ii. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14. And they attended Him during his whole pilgrimage upon earth. An Angel warned his foster-father to flee into Egypt, in order to evade the cruelty of Herod. “Behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child, and his mother, and flee into Egypt : and be thou there, until I bring thee word ; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him ;”—and that informed him when to return :—“When Herod was dead, behold, an Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to

Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life." Matt. ii. 13, 19, 20. The "Angels came and ministered unto Him," after his conflict in the wilderness. Matt. iv. 11. An Angel from heaven strengthened Him in his agony in the garden. "Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground—and there appeared an Angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Luke, xxii. 43, 44.

These holy messengers first declared His resurrection from the dead, to the women. "Behold, there was a great earthquake: for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning; and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the Angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." Matt. xxviii. 2, 5, 6. "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; He is risen; He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him." Mark, xvi. 5, 6, 7. "They found the stone rolled away from the se-

pulchre : and they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them, in shining garments : and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here : but is risen : remember how He spake unto you, when He was yet in Galilee ; saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified : and the third day rise again." Luke, xxiv. 2, 4, 7. " And they came, saying, that they had seen a vision of Angels." Verse 23.

And finally, when He was taken up into heaven, they informed his disciples of his coming again in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven. " When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts, i. 9, 11. So truly was that assertion of St. Paul to Timothy fulfilled in Christ. 1 Tim. iii. 16. " God was manifest in the flesh ; seen of Angels." And the Angels themselves seen by others, (according to our Lord's own words to Nathaniel, and the accomplishment of Jacob's vision in Him,) ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

2. *Toward Men, but particularly Believers.*

—1. Their presidency over particular countries and districts seems obscurely hinted by the prophet Daniel: as does that of the evil Angels, x. 20, where the Angel, that appeared to him, says, “Knowest thou wherefore I come to thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Greece shall come.” But what is much more clear, and more nearly concerns us, is

2. Their being sent forth and employed to make known and reveal the mind and will of God. It has already been observed that the law was given by the disposition of Angels: and the Gospel was by them declared to men in former times. It was an Angel that spake to Abraham, saying, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” “The Angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven.” “And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, * * * * In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xxii. 11, 15, 18. Jacob “dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the Angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, * * * In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xxviii. 12, 14. The book of the Revelations was “sent and signified by an Angel to Christ’s servant John.”

Rev. i. 1. "The Lord God sent his holy Angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." Rev. xxii. 6. "I Jesus have sent mine Angel to testify unto you these things." Rev. xxii. 16. And therein also we read of "an Angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Rev. xiv. 6. Besides, many more particular messages sent from God by their ministry, are recorded in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament. For example: to Elijah—"as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then, an Angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And the Angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee." 1 Kings, xix. 5, 7. "The Angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them." "The Angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, Go down with him, be not afraid of him." 2 Kings, i. 3, 15. To Hagar in the wilderness: "The Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, and he said, Hagar, Sarah's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? Return to thy mistress." Gen. xvi. 7, 9. And again, when "she said, Let me not see the death of the child,—and lift up her voice, and wept. The Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not: arise, lift up

the lad, and hold him in thine hand ; for I will make him a great nation." Gen. xxi. 16, 18. To Balaam. The Angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass three times? And the Angel of the Lord said, Go with the men." Num. xxii. 32, 35. To Manoah and his wife. "The Angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Thou shalt conceive and bear a son." Judges, xiii. 3. And the Angel of the Lord came again unto the woman." V. 9. "And the Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware." V. 13. To Gideon : "There came an Angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite : and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Judges, vi. 11, 12. To Gad, with a message to David. "The Angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and set up an altar unto the Lord, in the threshing-floor of Ornan, the Jebusite." 1 Chron. xxi. 18. And to St. Peter, Philip, and Paul, in the New Testament.

These messages have been delivered by the Angels, sometimes in dreams and visions, but more commonly to the persons awake, under corporeal forms, when also the Angels did eat and drink. "He took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them : and he stood

by them under the tree ; and they did eat." Gen. xviii. 8. " He made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." Gen. xix. 3. Examples of the former, we find in the case of Joseph. " While he thought on these things, behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife ; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Matt. i. 20 : and St Paul, who had a vision also in his sleep. " There stood by me this night the Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar ; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Acts, xxvii. 23, 24. And instances of the latter are all those just alleged, and probably more might be added.

3. *They have been employed in contending with Satan, and in assisting the servants of the Lord against him.*—" And he showed me Joshua, the high-priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Zec. iii. 1, 2. " Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, (he disputed about the body of Moses,) durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee." Jude, 9. " Whereas Angels, which are greater in power and might, bring

not railing accusation against them before the Lord.”
2 Pet. ii. 11.

4. *They have been instrumental towards the healing of bodily diseases.*—“ For an Angel went down at a certain season, into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” John, v. 4.

5. *They have been sent to reveal hidden and mysterious things to the saints, and foretell future events to them.*—“ Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the Angel that talked with me, said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And I said unto the Angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These be the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” Zech. i. 9, 19. “ I spake to the Angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord? and, What are these two olive trees? and, What be these two olive branches? Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” Zech. iv. 4, 11, 12, 14. “ Then the Angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? and he said, This is an ephah. Then said I to the Angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? and he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of

Shinar, and it shall be established and set there upon her own base." Chap. v. 5, 6, 10, 11. "And I turned, and lift up mine eyes and looked, and behold there came four chariots out from between the two mountains of brass. Then I said unto the Angel, What are these, my Lord? And the Angel answered, These are the four Spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." Chap. vi. 1, 4, 5. "And there came one of the seven Angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, and I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." "And I saw the woman, drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the Angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery." Rev. xvii. 1, 6, 7. "And there came unto me one of the seven Angels, which had one of the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." Chap. xxi. 9. And I John, saw these things, and heard them." "I Jesus, have sent mine Angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Chap. xxii. 8, 16.

6. *To direct, defend, and prosper them in their journies; and to keep them in all their ways.*—"The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house. He shall send his Angel

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before thee. The Lord before whom I walk; will send his Angel with thee, and prosper thy way." Gen. xxiv. 7, 40. "For He shall give his Angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Ps. xci. 11, 12.

7. *To encamp about them, especially in times of danger and fear.*—David, on his escape from Achish, of whom he "was sore afraid," says, "I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Ps. xxxiv. 4, 7. "Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's Host." Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. To deliver them from judgments. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. For He shall give his Angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways." Ps. xci. 1, 3, 11. And from plots and mischiefs which their enemies intended against them. "Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and behold the mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire, round about Elisha." 2 Kings, vi. 17. And many times in the

hour of extremity. "When the morning arose, then the Angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife and two daughters which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." Gen. xix. 15, 16. "And when we cried unto the Lord, He heard our voice, and sent an Angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border." Num. xx. 16. "Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his Angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in Him." Dan. iii. 28. "My God hath sent his Angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me." Dan. vi. 22. "The Angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth." Acts, v. xix. "And behold, the Angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts, xii. 7, 11.

8. To observe the demeanour of his people and servants in their assemblies, and how they behave themselves in the House of God.—"For this cause, ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the Angels." 1 Cor. xi. 10. "I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." 1 Tim. v. 21, 22.

9. To give good counsel to persons, and direct them what may be for their good.—"The Angel of the Lord found her (Hagar) by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction." Gen. xvi. 7, 11. "And when the Angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, of them that waited on him continually." "And they said, Cornelius, the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an Holy Angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee." Acts, x. 7, 22. And to restrain them, and keep back from evil and iniquity. "And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the An-

gal of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon an ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way." "And the Angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak." Numb. xxii. 22, 23, 35. And to discover to men their sins and transgressions, and reprove and threaten them, in order that they might turn from them. "And the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you." "And it came to pass, when the Angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lift up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord." Judges ii. 1, 4, 5.

10. *To denounce or to execute judgments on God's people for their iniquities and provocations.*—"Either three years' famine, or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, (while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee,) or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land, and the Angel of the Lord

destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel: Now, therefore, advise thyself, what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me." "And God sent an Angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it; and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and He repented Him of the evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the Angel of the Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." "And Ornan turned back, and saw the Angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat." 1 Chron. xxi. 12, 15, 20. And more especially upon those who are their enemies and persecutors. "Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the Angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the Angel of the Lord persecute them." Ps. xxxv. 5, 6. "The Lord sent an Angel, which cut off the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria: so he returned with shame of face to his own land." 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous; seven Angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God." "And the seven Angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven Angels were fulfilled."

Rev. xv. 1, 6, 8. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven Angels, Go your ways, and pour out the wrath of God upon the earth. And I heard the Angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." Rev. xvi. 1, 5, 6, 7. "And immediately the Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." Acts, xii. 23.

11. *To convey the souls of the saints, at their decease, into the abode of the blessed.*—"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Luke xvi. 22, 23.

12. *To assist in the solemn transactions of the last day.*—"And they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other;" and gather the tares to be burnt in the fire: which shall come to pass in the end of this world. For the Son of Man shall send

forth his Angels, "and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. xiii. 40—43, and chap. xxiv. 31. "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27. When the Son of Man shall come in "his glory, and all the Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Matt. xxv. 31, 32. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2-Thess. i. 7—10.

But let us not imagine, that the things revealed in the Word of God, concerning these blessed Spirits, were peculiar only to the times wherein they were done, or the persons to whom Angels primarily appeared or ministered. No. No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation; which is as true of the ministry of the Angels, as of the

Scripture prophecies themselves. They are equally beneficent to the human race at this day, as in generations of old; and are still sent forth by the great Father of Spirits, on the same gracious errands; viz. to minister unto the heirs of salvation. And although their invisible agency on our souls, their gentle and secret addresses to our faculties and affections, in favour of virtue and religion, are not easily distinguishable from the workings and operations of our own minds; yet it is undeniable to the saints, that they still partake of the effects of their friendly interposition and philanthropy; and in some cases, such as remarkable escapes and deliverances from danger; supernatural dreams or impressions, whereby they have been apprized, either of some incumbent evil, in order to avoid it, or directed in the pursuit of some considerable advantage they would otherwise have missed. In these, and similar cases, it is not difficult to determine from whence their help cometh. And some peculiarly devoted persons, in every age of the church, have been, or still may be, more abundantly favoured with their personal visits; which seems not obscurely hinted in Hebrews, xiii. 2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares." But these things not falling under the cognizance of others, and being by no means to be sought after by any, are not a proper subject for our particular discussion in this discourse, being God's peculiar gift to them.

We shall conclude this head, with the words of a celebrated poet of our own nation, when, after representing our high destiny and affinity to those happy beings, he adds,—

“ Nor are our brothers thoughtless of their kin,
Yet absent,—but not absent from their love :
Michael has fought our battles ; Raphael sung
Our triumphs ; Gabriel on our errands flown ;
Sent by the Sovereign.”—

1. *He is a great and mighty King, that hath such excellent servants, and such an innumerable company, such holy, heavenly, and glorious servants, waiting upon and ministering to Him.*—These declare his glory. “ The heavens declare the glory of God.” Ps. xix. 1. “ In the multitude of people is the King’s honour.” Prov. xiv. 28. And this excellent multitude of subjects and ministers shew forth the honour and majesty of Him whose kingdom ruleth over all. “ The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.” Ps. ciii. 19. “ The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels.” Matt. xvi. 27. “ When He cometh in the glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.” Mark, viii. 38. “ Lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.” Luke, ii. 9. “ I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the Heathen.” Mal. i. 14. If there was no spirit left in the Queen of Sheba when she

saw the attendance of Solomon's servants or ministers, (1 Kings, x. 5. 2 Chron. ix. 4,) how may it even swallow up our thoughts, and cause us to admire his excellent greatness, rule, dominion, and kingdom, who hath such servants ready to do his pleasure ; the least and meanest whereof is more excellent, not only than Solomon's chiefest servants, but than Solomon himself ? "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained ; what is man that Thou art mindful of Him ? and the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him ?" Ps, viii. 3, 4. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

2. *We learn to whom we should come if we desire the help and assistance of the Angels.*—Not unto them,—but to their Lord and Master. They are servants, and not their own masters ; nor may they do any thing, or go any where, but what and where their Lord pleaseth. It is good, therefore, for us to pray to God in the name of Jesus, to send us them, if it be good before Him ; and by them to inform, direct, or preserve us, &c. "He said unto me, The Lord before whom I walk, will send his Angel with thee, and prosper thy way. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Lord God of my master, Abraham, if now Thou do prosper my way which I go." Gen. xxiv. 40, 42. So Manoah entreated the Lord. "O my Lord, let the Man of God, (viz. the Angel,) which Thou didst send, come again unto us, and teach us what we shall

do. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the Angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field." Judges, xiii. 8, 9. When Peter was in prison, "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him;" and in due season "the Lord sent his Angel, and delivered him out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts, xii. 5, 11. This course let us also follow, if we desire their ministry. Let us not pray to, or religiously worship them, (which was expressly forbidden to St. John, when he fell down to worship at the feet of the Angel. "I fell at his feet to worship him; and he said unto me, See thou do it not." Rev. xix. 20, and xxii. 8, 9,) but let us pour out our hearts to Him who is our only refuge, and to whom all are servants; and let us fly to Him for confidence and strength.

3. *Let us learn hereby how we may have their ministry for our good, viz. by coming to, and abiding in, Christ Jesus.*—"He that dwelleth in the secret of the Most High," in Christ the Mercy Seat, "shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty," under the wings of the Cherubim of glory which overshadow the propitiatory or mercy seat. "The Cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings." Exod. xxv. 20. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock: Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, shine forth."

Ps. lxxx. 1. “And over it the Cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat.” **Heb. ix. 5.** “Because Thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation ; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling : for He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” **Ps. xci. 9, 12.**

4. *The belief of their ministry should strengthen the saints against occasions of fainting, and cause them to be quiet from the fear of evil.*—For the Holy One of Israel will be their defence ; the innumerable company of Angels are ministering Spirits, sent forth and employed for their good ; and these are more in number, and more strong and powerful, more wise and watchful, than their enemies, how potent, wise, or vigilant soever they may be. As King Hezekiah said to Judah, “Be strong and courageous : be not afraid nor dismayed for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles.” **2Chron. xxxii. 7, 8.**

He hath thousand thousands of these heavenly Spirits ministering unto Him for the good of his people. Hence, the Prophet Elisha useth the same expression to his servant, with King Hezekiah, when encompassed about in Dothan with the horses and chariots ; and his servant said to him, “**Alas,**

my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw : and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha." 2 Kings, vi. 15—17. "Some trust in chariots:" (Ps. xx. 7,) and they that had many of them were very dreadful and formidable; as was Jabin to the children of Israel; "for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." Judges, iv. 3. "Woe to them that stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong: but look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord." Isa. xxxi. 1.

But these Angels are God's chariots, wherewith He goes forth for the salvation of his people—for salvation with his anointed. "Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon Thine horses, and thy chariots of salvation? Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed: Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck." Hab. iii. 8, 13. And He hath not only nine hundred or nine thousand chariots: but "The chariots of the Lord

are twice ten thousand, even thousands of Angels." Ps. lxxviii. 17. And one Angel hath more strength than all Jabin's chariots. "For it came to pass that night, that the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." 2 Kings, xix. 35. "Thou hast said, with the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon: and will cut down the tall cedar-trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel." Verse 23.

With these He destroyed Jabin's general with his 900 chariots. They fought from heaven, and overcame them. "They fought from heaven: the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Judges, v. 20; with "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job, xxxviii. 7. He will come flying on these horses of his. "He rode upon a Cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind." Ps. xviii. 10. And riding on these chariots of salvation for the good and protection of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him. ("And gold for the pattern of the chariot of the Cherubims, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord." 1 Chron. xxviii. 18.) And therefore they may, and should, serve God without fear of their enemies. "There is none like unto

the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Deut. xxxviii. 26, 29. " The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels : The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." " To Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old : lo, He doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. O God, Thou are terrible out of thy holy places : The God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto his people : blessed be God." Ps. lxxviii. 17, 33, 35.

5. We should praise God for his exceeding kindness in placing us under the care and protection of those blessed Spirits ; and for appointing them the guardians of our virtue who are shortly to become the associates of our bliss.—He might have wrought the work of our salvation from beginning to end, without the intervention of instruments, by his single Almighty arm ; but He is pleased to assign to those invisible agents their peculiar office and employment in the church militant for many gracious ends ; but principally we may suppose, to endear us to each other against the approaching period when we shall form a part of their happy society. And therefore we should now de-

port ourselves suitably to so high a destination, and such noble and glorious expectations.

This, no doubt, is the reason of the Apostle's solemn exhortation to his beloved Timothy, when he charges him not only before God, and the Lord Jesus, but also the elect Angels, to observe his injunctions: and also of that petition in the Lord's Prayer, which Himself has taught us, saying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." For why is the worship of the heavenly host here proposed to our imitation? and why are we called to resemble the holiness and purity of those spiritual and happy beings? but because, being soon to be admitted into the most familiar intercourse and communion with them, we must of necessity be assimilated to their nature and dispositions here. And as the omnipresent Jehovah calleth those things that be not, as though they were; and future events are to Him as already accomplished; so believers are said to be even now come to the Mount Zion, and to an innumerable company of Angels. And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, adopts the same style, when speaking of their Christian privileges, he says, "Who hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." Ephes. ii. 5, 6. As if he considered them no longer the inhabitants of the earth; "but, to use the words of the late William Law, "as holding a certain rank and order among heavenly beings." Oh! how can we meditate, or even glance a

thought upon these things, without the warmest acknowledgments to our merciful God, and compassionate Redeemer, for such astonishing kindness! And how can we read our title to such exalted honours, without sinking into the dust under the deepest sense of our utter unworthiness!

In conclusion—Since the saints are thus highly favoured, let them not, as Esau, sell their birthright for a mess of pottage; *i. e.* renounce their pretensions to celestial mansions, for the sake of any present enjoyments. Let them rather consider themselves as the charge of Angels, and the God of Angels. And if those blessed Spirits are now (not only the spectators) but also friends and assistants of their conflicts, let them acquit themselves like those who shall, ere long receive their plaudits, and be made partakers of their joys.—Glory be to God, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

FINIS.

J. Baskett, Printer.